Scalping Enemies Ancient Practice

All Indian tribes with which I am acquainted scalp their enemies killed in battle. Of the origin of scalp taking but little is known, and that vague and indefinite. Nearly every tribe has some wild, weird legend to account for the custom, but these traditions vary widely as to the cause. That "raising the hair" of an enemy is of great antiquity there is no doubt, for in the Bible it is related how the soldiers tore the skin from the heads of their vanquished foes.

With the North American savage there appears to be some close affiliation between the departed and his hair. I have often asked many a blood begrimed warrior why he should care for a dead man's hair, says Capt. Henry Inman in the Kansas City Star, and invariably a number of reasons has been assigned. It is an evidence to his people that he has triumphed over his enemy. The scalps are very prominent factors in the incantations of the "Medicine Lodge," a feature of religious rites. The savage believes there is a wonderfully inherent power in the scalp of an enemy; all the excellent qualities of the victim go with his hair the moment it is wrenched from his head. If the victim is a renowned warrior, so much greater is the anxiety to procure his scalp, for the fortunate possessor then inherits all the bravery and powers of its original owner.

I never knew of but one instance in all my experience among the Indians, covering a period of more than the third of a century, where a white man, taken prisoner in battle, escaped death. It was a great many years ago; the party, a dear friend, still living, a grand old mountaineer but the homeliest man on earth, probably. He was red faced, wrinkled and pockmarked, with a mouth as large and full of teeth as a gorilla, and there was no more hair on his head than there is on a billiard ball.

He was captured in a prolonged fight and taken to the village of the tribe where the principal chief resided. That dignitary gave one disgusted look at the prisoner and said that he was "Bad Medicine," and if not the "Evil Spirit" himself, closely related to it. The chief ordered his subordinate to furnish the prisoner with a pony, loaded him with provisions, provided him with a rifle and told him to go back to his people.

For the reasons stated the Indian of the great plains and Rocky Mountains would rather take one scalp of a famous scout or army officer who has successfully chastised them—for example Custer, Sully, Miles or Crook—than a dozen scalps of ordinary white men.

There are many instances on record where men have been scalped and yet survived the terrible ordeal, but in every case the scalper supposed his victim dead, the later taking good care that his foeman should not be disabused of the supposed fact.

In 1867 a party of Indians took up a rail on the Union Pacific Railway and laid obstructions on the track. After dark a freight train ran into the trap and was wrecked. The engineer and fireman were instantly killed. The conductor and brakemen jumped off to find themselves beset by a band of yelling savages. They ran into the darkness and all escaped except one, who was pursued, shot and fell. The Indian who had fired dismounted from his pony, and straddling that unlucky man's body, scalped him, stripped him of all clothing but shirt and shoes and rode away.

Early in the morning another freight train was flagged by a hideous looking object, which turned out to be the brakeman who had been shot through the body and scalped! He had recovered his sense, and knowing that the train was due, walked some distance down the track to save it from being wrecked. He was taken on board and the train moved up to the wreck, which, after plundering it, the Indians left, just as it was thrown over through their devilish act.

I saw the unfortunate man some months afterward. He was perfectly recovered, but with a horrible looking head. He stated that the bullet, although knocking him down, had not made him unconscious, and the greatest trial during that awful night was the necessity of shamming dead, he not daring even to groan while the Indian was sawing at his scalp with a very dull knife.

The other instance which has come under my own observation is that of Robert McGee. In 1864 McGee, a slender stripling of a lad, came to Leavenworth, Kan., seeking employment. That town was the base of Government supplies for all the frontier military posts even as far away as Arizona. A freight caravan was at that time loading for Fort Union, N. M. The wagons and whole outfit were owned by a contractor named H. C. Barret, but he would not take the chances of the long and perilous trip of more than seven hundred miles through the Indian infested plains unless the Government leased the train outright, or gave him an indemnifying bond and assurance against loss. The bond was given and Barret proceeded to hire teamsters, a hard task on account of the danger attending the journey. Young McGee was among the number engaged, and the caravan started July 1, 1864.

It took the old Santa Fe trail, striking the Arkansas River at the Great Bend of that stream, near its confluence with the Walnut. The region was very rough and called the "dark and bloody ground," for some of the worst Indian massacers in the history of the plains were perpetrated there. Some insignificant skirmishes with the Indians had taken place, but nothing to cause any serious alarm, and now, as the caravan was approaching the vicinity of Fort Larned, its prozimity was believed to be sufficient protection from further possible danger.

On the afternoon of July 18—it had been an excessively hot day—the caravan went into camp at an early hour. The escorting troops stacked arms about half a mile distant, but in full view of the train. The men should have kept a good lookout for surprises, probably did in a way, but there was a feeling of security in the knowledge that a regular attack by savages is rarely made until the early hours of the morning when sleep is heaviest.

About 4 o'clock, however, a band of Brule Sioux, under the lead of Little Turtle, descended from the sand hills in all the fury of a tornado, uttering their wild warwhoops, and of all the small army of men employed by the caravan young Robert McGee alone came out alive to tell the story of the massacre. Every individual was shot dead and scalped as he lay or sat at the mess table. The mules, of course, went to swell the herd of the savages, but the wagons were destroyed by fire, their canvas covers cut up into breech clouts and the flour with which the caravan was loaded emptied from its sacks on the prairie.

Young McGee was attacked by Little Turtle himself and knocked to the ground by one blow of his tomahawk. As he lay there, partially stunned and bleeding, Little Turtle fired two arrows into his body, pinning him to the earth. Then in a transport of fiendishness he took Robert's own pistol and shot him, the bullet lodging in his backbone. Not quite satisfied that he had made a good job of it, he stooped over the prostrate boy's body and, running his knife around his head, lifted sixty-four square inches of his scalp, trimming it off just back of the ears.

Believing his victim to be dead by this time, the chief abandoned him, but others of the band in passing hacked him with their knives and poked holes into him with their long lances. All the others in the train were long since dead, killed outright, and their bodies mutilated.

After the savages had completed their work they rode, whooping and yelling, away, and the troops that had witnessed the whole affair from their vantage ground came upon the scene to investigate and learn whether the Sioux had been properly met or not by the ill-fated men of the caravan. The officer in command was very properly court-martialed and dismissed in disgrace from the service. He never gave any satisfactory reason for his outrageous and cowardly conduct.

The only part the troops took in the affair was to bury the dead. When they attempted to put young McGee under the ground they found a very lively corpse, despite the fact that he was scalped and had received fourteen distinct wounds, any one of which would have terminated the life of the ordinary man.

After interring the dead the soldiers hastened to Fort Larned, thirty miles distant, where young McGee was placed under the care of the post surgeon. It was three months before he was able to be moved from there. During that time he had fair command of his mental faculties, and was sufficiently strong to tell all the incidents of the attack.

Barret, the owner of the caravan, who had remained in Leavenworth, on hearing what had befallen his property put in a claim for big damages from the Government and was awarded a sum which made him independent for life, but he persistently refused to do anything for the sole survivor.

McGee's claims were laid before the President, and in October, 1864, Mr. Lincoln sent him a letter and a pass by special envoy, directing him to come to Washington as soon as he was able to travel, and stating that he himself would see that McGee's wrongs were righted.

When McGee had recovered sufficiently to move about, his mind, which had been remarkably clear up to that time, began to cloud, and he became possessed of a mania to hunt Sioux to the death. In one of his frenzied spells the pass and the letter from President Lincoln were stolen from him, and neither the President nor the army took any further notice of him.

For a dozen years after receiving his injuries McGee was a wanderer, and when it was discovered that Little Turtle had been wiped out, it was said that the biggest notch on McGee's gun barrel commemorated the full measure of his revenge, a long mark for the chief and nine shorter ones for the subordinate head men who had bitten the dust at the command of the unerring rifle that never failed to execute its mission when pointed at a Brule's breast.

After Little Turtle had been sent to the happy hunting grounds McGee's mind began to regain its normal equilibrium until at last he once more became perfectly sane.

CAFES OF WONDERFUL CITY

(Continued from page 7.)

quent in Vienna society over accusations of unfair play. Several nobles of high rank have been fined heavily for cheating, while others have been banished from the Empire.

Austria-Hungry is one of the strongholds of the Roman Catholic church. At every turn one encounters evidences of its vast possessions, as well as the tremendous power it wields. The official statistics of Hungary show that one million five hundred thousand acres (two per cent of the land of the entire country) belong to the church. The treasures of the monasteries and churches include collections of pictures, precious stones, and works of art that are more valuable than even the royal collections in some countries. There are about sixteen thousand Catholic priests in Austria alone, and the church authorities control enormous sums of money.

INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH.

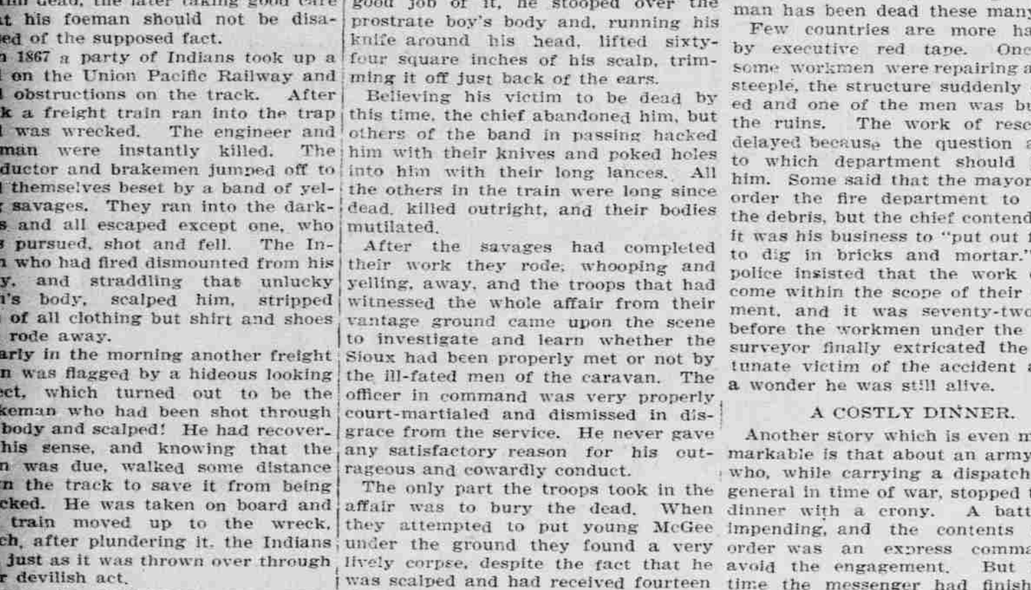
A late cardinal archbishop of that country used to send twenty thousand dollars every year to Rome as a contribution to the fund known as "Peter's pence." The presence of priests mingling with the law makers on the floor of parliament is an indication of the far reaching influence of the church. The fondness of the people for festive celebrations of a religious character is evinced by the fact that the congregation in one prominent village still celebrate the anniversary of the installation of their bishop, although the good man has been dead these many years.

Few countries are more hampered by executive red tape. Once when some workmen were repairing a church steeple, the structure suddenly collapsed and one of the men was buried in the ruins. The work of rescue was delayed because the question arose as to which department should liberate him. Some said that the mayor should order the fire department to remove the debris, but the chief contended that it was his business to "put out fire, not to dig in bricks and mortar." The police insisted that the work did not come within the scope of their department, and it was seventy-two hours before the workmen under the district surveyor finally extricated the unfortunate victim of the accident and for a wonder he was still alive.

A COSTLY DINNER.

Another story which is even more remarkable is that about an army officer who, while carrying a dispatch to his general in time of war, stopped to have dinner with a crony. A battle was impending, and the contents of the order was an express command to avoid the engagement. But by the time the messenger had finished the meal with his friend, the clash took place and six thousand men were killed and wounded. The records show that the only punishment visited upon the procrastinating officer was dismissal from the service. In almost any other country he would certainly have been shot for such unmitigated negligence of duty.

FREDERIC J. HASKIN.



MA KNEW WHAT SHE MEANT.

Mrs. O'Flynn—"Aff fer th' day, Jamesy? Well, come back oily."
Daughter (who has had advantages)—"Muthah, deah, you should say 'early,' not 'oily.'"
Mrs. O'Flynn—"Oi sed oily, an' Oi mane oily. He's afther goin' automobilin' wid his boss."

TULARE LAKE A SEA.

VISALIA, April 6.—Tulare lake has grown in dimensions as the result of recent rains till it now covers thirty-six sections—equal to 23,000 acres. Ordinarily only Deer creek and Posa creek empty into the lake, but now Kings river, Cross creek, Tule river and branches of the Kaweah rivers are flowing into it. In 1877 the water of the lake began to recede. At that time the lake was thirty miles wide and forty miles long. It kept receding till it was reduced to a body of water twelve miles wide during the rainy season and only a few inches deep, and in the fall of the year it dried up entirely.

All reclamation districts in the bed of the lake have been wrecked, with the possible exception of two. In these submerged districts are four harvesters left there last year. The water is so deep that only the tops of the harvesters are visible. It is estimated by men familiar with the conditions that when the snow in the mountains melts in May and June Tulare lake will have a great deal more water than at any time during the recent high water.